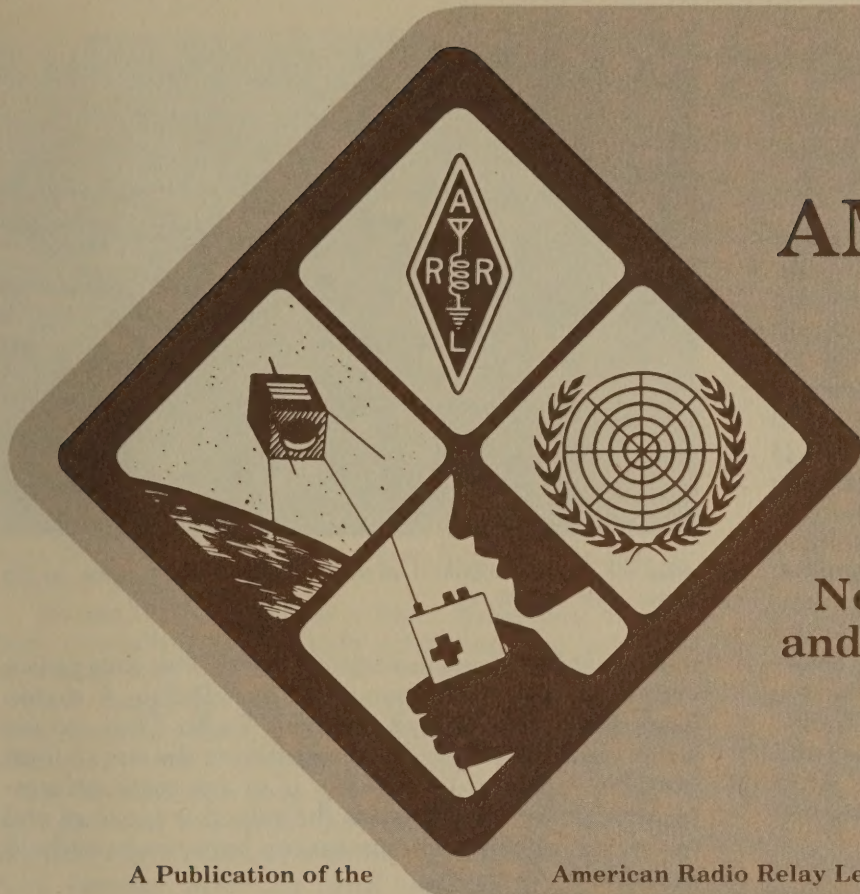




AMATEUR RADIO

News of the Amateur Radio
and Amateur Satellite Services

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“Like Some Giant Stepped Out of the Sky and Crushed Half the City”

PARIS, TEXAS — April 2 started out like most other spring mornings in this small town 100 miles north of Dallas. Before the day would end, nine people would die, hundreds would be injured and many would lose everything — all at the hands of a tornado.

Dick Boots, the Paris emergency management coordinator, had been warned by the National Weather Service (NWS) of an impending storm. A tornado had touched down in Bonham, 30 miles due west of Paris. At 3:43 p.m. Boots saw the air quickly go from calm to violent and two or three vortexes form together. For the next 23 minutes, nature carved a 10-mile-long 200-ft.-wide path of destruction across the city, reducing to rubble in seconds the accomplishments of lifetimes of work and savings.

Eddie Fitzgerald, a Paris firefighter on his way to a fire, received a call to sound the alarm warning residents of the tornado. While driving through the streets sounding the alarm, he spotted the tornado in his rearview mirror. Jumping from his truck, he took refuge in a culvert. When the storm passed, he saw injured people lying about — people who had not taken the advance warnings seriously.

The funnel moved eastward across town sucking up whole houses from their foundations and spewing chaos in all directions. Ora E. Spangler and her daughter, Martha Jo Landers, died when the twister demolished their home. As the tornado weaved to the east, it approached the backyard of Lillian Marks. She threw herself in a shallow spot created by the family dog — and the dog ran

into the house. When the roar had subsided, Mrs. Marks ran to the rubble that had been her home. There among the ruins she found the dog, unharmed!

Eight blocks farther on its path, the storm killed another woman. A few seconds later, three sisters sought shelter in a church, which had been evacuated and

(Continued next page)



Truck rests atop rubble that had once been a single family residence in a normally quiet, well kept section of Paris, TX.

Crushed

Continued

locked when the first sirens sounded. Two of the three died when the wind exploded the walls of the church. The twister plowed on through subdivision after subdivision. Nothing in its path withstood the fury.

At the Paris Lumber Company, 50 employees saved themselves by jamming into the company vault. After wreaking havoc on the lumber yard, the twister headed north into a mobile home park. Rescue workers found the bodies of 24-year-old Judy Harrington and her 11-week-old son, Bradley, under a pile of twisted metal and paneling that had been their home. The time clock at the lumber yard had stopped at 4:06 p.m. It was only 23 minutes after Dick Boots had sounded the alarm on the other side of town, but it was a lifetime for some.

Telephone and electrical services were out; regular service would not be restored for days. In the meantime, local officials needed communications among themselves and with the rest of the world. NWS had alerted Mike Gray, a Grayson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) member of the potential for severe weather. As the front passed through Grayson County, Mike got in his car and followed the storm eastward into Fannin County and kept in touch with other ARES members through his mobile Amateur Radio transceiver.

Other amateurs relayed Mike's messages about the weather to the NWS, who in turn contacted local officials, such as Dick Boots. As the storm moved into Lamar County and headed for Paris, ARES reached a stage of full alert. Along the way, Metz Shatley, another Radio Amateur, joined with Mike. After the Paris touch down, Mike and Metz stopped following the storm and established an emergency communications link between Paris and the world.

For two hours immediately after the storm, Mike and Metz provided the only communications link out of Paris. Mike manned the radio while Metz acted as a runner between the police and Mike. Other ham radio groups throughout North Texas swung into action. Phil Clements, the ARRL Section Communications Manager, and Charles Byars, the ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator, were on the scene in hours. Emergency operations centers in Dallas, Ft. Worth, Paris and the state capital of Austin were linked together with an Amateur Radio communications circuit. Additionally, Radio Ama-



After the tornado rubble is all that remains of this business on the eastern side of Paris, TX.

teurs established and maintained a circuit for state police communications between Paris and Dallas. A dozen hams from the Garland Amateur Radio Club arrived volunteering their services and offering the use of their portable repeater. (A repeater is an automatic retransmission station that extends the effective range of and makes for reliable communications between hand-held portable transceivers.)

That night hundreds of outgoing messages were sent for families in the affected area. Members of the Dallas ARES and other hams manned telephones and radios at a Dallas blood bank through the night and into the next day. They collected incoming health and welfare inquiries for the Red Cross. As radio propagation changed with the time of day, the amateur groups shifted operations from one band to another to take advantage of the best circuits.

By 6:30 p.m. over 900 such messages had been received, serviced and responses sent by the group at the Amateur Radio station located in the Red Cross building. Of this number, 163 required house-to-house searches, which the hams carried out with the aid of the repeater loaned by the Garland group. Jerry Keesler, a district emergency coordinator put it this way, "The hams knew what needed to be done, set up their stations, and went to work. We just could not have handled this without them."

Radio Operator Active in Aftermath of Storm

by Faye Escalante, Terrell Tribune

Did you have a loved one in Paris when the killer tornado struck?

It's nice to know that there are people you can count on to get news to and from those loved ones.

Terrell HAM Radio operator Jack Ledbetter is one of those people. He worked at his radio controls several hours Friday night relaying messages to and from local residents about their friends and relatives in Paris.

The messages were relayed through the Dallas Amateur Radio Club. "It was this morning before we could get some replies," he said. "Mainly because of the mag-

nitude of the calls going into Paris... People were calling from all over the world, trying to get into Paris, Texas."

One Terrell woman was assured by Ledbetter that her relatives were unharmed. Another expectant mother learned that her husband was safe but that their home was demolished. She is from Terrell and came here to visit shortly before the disaster struck.

"If she stayed at home, she might have been killed," Ledbetter observed. "To lose a house is a great shock, but in reality they were lucky."

Volunteer amateur radio operators set up a line of
(Continued next page)

Radio Ham Aids Couple in Distress

by Don Learned, San Diego Tribune

At 10:45 P.M. March 29, Spring Valley (CA) ham radio operator Gary Bunk was trying to call Colombia in South America.

What he got instead was the desperate, exhausted cries for help of a Seal Beach couple whose 32-foot sloop was foundering in heavy seas about 1,200 miles south of San Diego and 1,000 miles off the Mexican coast.

Standing by for a moment — then realizing no one else was answering — Bunk then patched into the boat's frequency to set off a 41-hour rescue drama as Glen and Betty Reynolds fought the waters filling their boat.

Their battle ended about 3:30 P.M. March 31, when they finally stepped safely aboard a San Diego-based tuna boat that earlier sent its own helicopter ahead to reassure them.

"He just kept saying, 'We've had it down here. We are both mentally and physically exhausted.' He just kept repeating that," Bunk said.

Bunk said he got the couple's position and condition, then contacted the Coast Guard here, which passed the emergency to the Long Beach station.

But because the Long Beach station's radio contact with the boat was weak, Bunk said, he maintained the key long night's contact with the Reynolds until about 6 A.M. Tuesday, when the signal began to fade.

"He wanted help," Bunk said. "They were hitting one rain squall after another. The weather conditions were too much to handle. They couldn't raise their sail and they were getting pretty beat up inside the boat."

There were no ships in the area — the nearest Coast Guard cutter was 900 miles to the north — and it wasn't until sometime Tuesday, Bunk said, that the tuna clipper *Mar del Sur* picked up the call and sped in the Reynolds' direction.

The Coast Guard said the couple, whose sloop *Faith* is homeported in Seal Beach, left there on Jan. 9, stopped at eight or nine ports along the Mexican coast, then set sail on Feb. 11 from Acapulco to the Marquesas Islands in the southern Pacific.

"They weren't sinking," Bunk said. "They were just exhausted. They couldn't stay awake and just about every time he was saying, 'We're just about at our end here.'"

As the signals bounced away from Bunk's receiver, other ham operators picked up the call, the clearest to Ron Rausin's set in Houston, who monitored the Reynolds through another 36 hours.

Rausin said Mrs. Reynolds told him of a salty taste in her mouth, a sign of dehydration. "She said she couldn't spend another day on the boat," he said.

Rausin's housekeeper, Patsy Roy, said when she heard the Reynolds finally sight the tuna boat "I just started crying. It was so fantastic."

Rausin said he understood the tuna clipper has nearly a full load of fish and will head back to San Diego soon with the Reynolds aboard.

Rausin said Reynolds had pulled the plug on the boat to sink it, saying he didn't want to be reminded of the ordeal again.

(Reprinted with permission from *The San Diego Tribune*)

Storm Aftermath

Continued

communications between police, fire departments, hospital and other emergency services in addition to trying to obtain information for worried relatives and friends.

The amateur radio emergency services do not rely on telephones, he said, adding, "It's a direct over the mountain you might say."

"We enjoy helping," Ledbetter said. "Amateur radio is a hobby for us, but in any emergency situation, we are all

available to help out ... Part of our hobby is helping people."

In addition to aiding in emergency, amateur radio operators patch communications through to servicemen and women overseas and aiding others in communicating with their families in far-away places.

"We even go to the point of directing parades through Dallas," Ledbetter said with a smile.

"It's something to do," he said of his hobby. "If you have something planned that doesn't work out, like say the television goes on the blink, you can always go to the radio and strike up a conversation with someone."

He has talked with people in 200 different countries.

"It's nice to be able to talk to someone in Russia and get acquainted with them," he said. Ledbetter also communicates with his radio acquaintances through the mail.

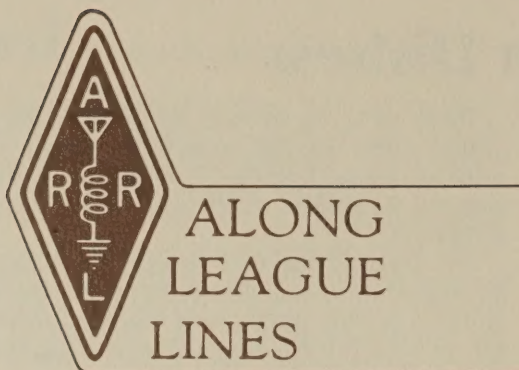
"Amateur radio is exciting," he said. "We just need more people in it. If you can help out just one person, it's worth all the time and money you spend."

(Reprinted with permission from *The Terrell, Texas Tribune*)



Terrell, TX Amateur Radio operator Jack Ledbetter relays messages to and from Paris disaster site after the tornado destroyed hundreds of homes and killed nine.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE? Contact Perry Williams, ARRL's Washington Area Coordinator, and arrange for a personal visit by calling (202) 296-9107.



It was 1913, and a severe windstorm left a large portion of the midwest totally isolated. Amateur Radio operators at the University of Michigan and Ohio State University, along with other individual amateurs, successfully bridged the communications gap with the outside world. This was the first known instance of Amateur Radio emergency communications, which has been followed by countless others over the years, everything from an overseas earthquake to a fender-bender on the interstate.

In the early days such emergency work was spontaneous but without any organization. Seeing this void, the League created a vast field organization of volunteer Amateur Radio operators serving the public. This organization is implemented today through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and the National Traffic System (NTS).

The ARES now consists of approximately 70,000 licensed Amateur Radio operators who have registered

their availability for emergency operation at the local level. These amateurs are directed by local and district emergency coordinators in each state and Canadian province.

NTS is a daily operating organization for handling medium and long-distance written standard formatted messages (radiograms). NTS consists of a vast web of interconnected networks (nets) at four levels, meeting on a 365-day-per-year schedule, which provides for the systematic flow of amateur message traffic from point of origin to point of delivery from coast to coast. In an emergency, NTS "cycles" are expanded as necessary.

A separate subpart of the U.S. Amateur Regulations (Part 97, Subpart F) provides for the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service. RACES is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and its primary purpose is to serve government civil preparedness agencies. The League recommends dual membership between ARES and RACES groups whenever possible, so that the amateur efforts will be unified and efficient.

Twice a year, the League sponsors massive exercises to help amateurs meet the challenge of emergency preparedness — Field Day, held in June (perhaps the best known amateur activity) and October's Simulated Emergency Test. Sometime in June the League's field organization will participate in a limited test of the U.S. Government's National Communications System, to explore the role that Amateur Radio might play in a post-nuclear scenario. If the "unthinkable" ever happens, and if there is anything left to put back together, then Amateur Radio operators are likely to play a significant role in the rebuilding process. Let us hope this is one time our preparations are unnecessary.



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